Proof of Handwriting in Judicial Proceedings.—The following quotation from the report of the Attorney-General of the United States is self-explanatory:

"I recommend the enactment of a law making a uniform rule for the federal courts throughout the country respecting the admission of evidence to prove disputed handwriting. Briefly stated, the general common-law rule which prevails in some of the states is to the effect that in a case involving disputed handwriting, no genuine specimen of the handwriting of the accused person not already in the record, or that is not otherwise relevant, can be introduced as a basis for comparison. (*Withaup v. United States,* 127 Fed. 530.)

"In a recent letter on this subject the United States attorney for the Southern District of Iowa says:

"'In many cases arising under the criminal laws of the United States the case hinges upon the question of handwriting, and a large number of such cases are found in enforcing the laws relating to the postoffice and postal service. The conviction of offenders in such cases is well nigh impossible, especially if the defendant is a criminal of experience in courts and court proceedings. As a rule they refuse to put their names to any paper connected with the record and refuse to make any written statement in connection with any matter connected with the case.'

"During the first session of the Sixtieth Congress, there was introduced in the House, by the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, the following bill (H. R. 12676) relating to proof of signatures and handwriting:

"'Be it enacted, etc., That in any proceeding before a court or officer of the United States where the genuineness of the handwriting of any person may be involved, any admitted or proved handwriting of such person shall be competent evidence as a basis for comparison by witnesses or by the jury, court or officer conducting such proceeding to prove or disprove such genuineness.'

"This bill had the approval of my predecessor, and I earnestly urge that this or some similar measure be enacted into law.

"GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM, Attorney-General."

(From the Annual Report of the Attorney-General of the United States for the year 1911, p. 88.) A. S. OSBORN.

Judge Kavanagh on the Causes of Crime.—In a warning sounded by Judge Marcus A. Kavanagh at a banquet given on December 6, 1911, in Chicago, in honor of Judge John P. McGoorty, Judge Kavanagh said "The law is so charged and clogged with harmful legislation and technicalities that justice is defeated. I want to call attention to concrete facts. A German's horse and cart were stolen and the case was fined $1. A pawnbroker armed two burglars and set them to work. They broke into forty homes and were caught red-handed, but an 'inadvertance' in the judgment set them free by a ruling of the Supreme Court. There is a whole lot the matter with the administration of our criminal law, and the people are awakening and are looking to us judges and members of the bar to do something." R. H. G.

Municipal Court of Chicago.—The annual report of Chief Justice Harry Olson of the Municipal Court of Chicago gives the following interesting items as to the volume of business done in this court:

There were filed during the year 53,223 civil cases; 50,931 were disposed

of, leaving 2,292. The money judgments amounted to $4,096,254.58, an amount equal to that entered by the High Court of Justice in the City of London, England, for a like period. There were filed during the year criminal, quasi-criminal and preliminary hearings in felony cases, a total of 93,832; 92,730 were disposed of, leaving a balance of 1,102. Jurors' fees paid to jurors in civil cases amounted to $93,284.15 and in criminal cases $17,657.55, making a total of $110,941.70. During the last year there were 2,418 more cases filed than disposed of. There were 4,955 more cases filed than during the previous year and 2,282 more cases disposed of. The total receipts of the court for the year were $781,000. The net earnings returned to the taxpayers amount to $568,000. The total expense of the court for the year was $768,000. The report shows there were 93,832 new criminal suits filed during the year, divided as follows: Quasi, 72,189; preliminary, 9,361; criminal, 12,012. Of these cases 92,730 were disposed of as follows: Quasi, 71,434; preliminary, 9,526; criminal, 11,770. R. H. G.

Dr. Ullman on the Crippen Case.— In *Osterreichische Zeitschrift für Strafrecht,* Vol. II, 4 u. 5 Heft., 382 ff, Dr. Julius Ullman discusses the Crippen case. The writer remarks that in the same way that the Thaw case, some years ago, threw light upon the peculiarities of American criminal procedure, the continent is indebted to the publicity given the Crippen case for some knowledge of the essential characteristics of English criminal procedure in the gradually altered form given to it by Reform Statutes and practice. He remarks that the formality cult (which is still in vigor in America and unduly lengthens the procedure) has practically disappeared in England. The endless preliminaries in the selection and examination of talesmen, challenges, etc., leading to trickery, have disappeared. The indirect proof of the *corpus delicti* would have been difficult, if not impossible, in America. The speed with which the whole process was conducted is the subject of wonder and admiration. The tendency in Great Britain and in the proposals of Bar Associations in America to make the "merits," rather than the "formalities," count is noted.

The contempt proceedings growing out of newspaper comment on the trial are understood and intelligently reviewed. Dr. Ullman says: "The more strictly the contempt rules repress public criticism during the pendency of the trial, the more freely will this criticism be exercised after the trial in the land of the liberty of the press." The proposition stated by J. Darling that "trial by newspaper is not to be substituted for trial by jury" is so essentially bound up with the jury system that no legislation introducing that system can disregard it. The frequent separate investigations by political newspapers in Europe would no longer be immune. Ullman says, "Objectivity of courtroom reports before the final verdict of the law is indispensable to impartial findings by lay judges (jurors).

J. I. Kelly, Chicago.

PENOLOGY.

"My Life in Prison."—Under the above title the *Bulletin* of San Francisco is publishing a series of chapters under the authorship of Donald Lowrie. It is a fascinating story of the crime, capture and conviction of the author;